

57
What is M A N?

A N

O D E,

I N

P I N D A R I C Verse.

I N

Fifteen S T A N Z A S.

O EVE! in an evil Hour thou didst give Ear
To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit Man's Voice —————

————— Our Eyes
Open'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both Good and Evil ——— Good lost, and Evil got! ———
Bad Fruit of Knowledge —————

MILT. *Lib.* IX.

Πᾶσα σὰρξ χορτὴ, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθρωπος χορτὴ.

SEPTUAG. Isa. xl. 6.

L O N D O N:

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MDCCXXXVIII.

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O D E

P I N D A R I C Verc.

Fifteen STANAS

O Evil in an evil Hour thou dost give birth
To this Worm, of whom I never taught
To whisper Man's Vice — On the
Open eye and joyful heart we know
Both Good and Evil — Good, I say, and Evil
Bad Fruit of Knowledge —

Mt. IX.

Printed by J. B. Buckland at the Press of the
Meadow at the Sign of the Cross and the W.

MDCCLXXVIII

Printed



What is Man?

A N

O D E,

I N

P I N D A R I C Verse.

STANZA I.



ASSIST me, heav'nly Muse, in lofty Verse;
Teach me in tuneful Numbers to rehearse,
Of once immortal Man the happy State,
His Glory to himself relate;
Let him see what he hath lost,
And shew him what his Disobedience cost.

B

II.

II.

First, place him in a Paradise,
As he came from his Maker's Hands,
E're he of Sin had knit the Bands;
When he was holy, righteous, just and wise:
Let Angels on the new-born Fav'rite wait,
And shew him in his Glory, at the utmost Height.
What, though than Angels he was lower?
They saw him with the more Surprise,
To Glory and to Honour rise,
And o'er the whole Creation have the Power.

III.

Now let the Morning Stars rejoice,
Let Angels join their tuneful Voice,
Let Heav'n and Earth, let ev'ry Creature raise
Its Voice, to sing the great Creator's Praise.
Let Man above the rest rejoice to see
Himself Partaker of Divinity.

IV.

IV.

Enough, my Muse! we cannot raise him higher,
Above this Pitch no Mortal can aspire.

In Silence let us view his Happiness,

Above our Power to express!

Why dost thou start, and seem'st to fear?

Sure there can be no Danger here.

Ah me! too soon I see the fatal Cause,

He's giddy grown----we have no Room to pause

On Happiness-----

See, see, he falls down from the Height!

And sinks beneath the mighty Weight.

See, how he lies stretch'd on the Ground,

Asleep, and senseless of his fatal Wound!

Is this the Man whom we so lately saw

Cloathed with Majesty and Awe!

How is he fall'n! he who was rais'd so high

In Glory-----to the lowest Misery!

V.

V.

Have we then seen? Or was it but a Dream,
Which we have made the Subject of our Theme?

No! 'twas a real solid Good,

Too great a Trust for Flesh and Blood.

'Twas by himself Man's Happiness was lost,

And the kind Purposes of Heaven cross'd.

Hark! how the angry Thunder rolls,

And Hell with all its Fiends insulting howls.

What Crowds of Monsters do I see!

What Shoals of foul Deformity!

Phantoms which I blush to name,

Fear and Horror, Guilt and Shame,

Vain-glory, Arrogance and Pride;

See how with Impudence they stride.

Revenge and Malice, Murder and Debate,

Oppression, Falshood, Envy, Fraud and Hate;

Lust and Ambition lead the Van,

See how they make tow'rds fallen Man;

See how they round about him throng,

And hiss, with pleasure, as they pass along.

Ye

M A N.

9

Ye Guardian Angels, lend your Aid,
For Mercy Sake,
Some Pity take
On wretched Man, to Misery betray'd.

VI.

Hail him, my Muse, perhaps he'll hear,
Remind him of past Happiness,
His present Danger on him press,
And move him by the Force of Hope and Fear.
Compare his present with his former State;
What he is now, and what he was, relate.

VII.

Hail, mighty Monarch of the Universe,
Lord of created Things below,
Whose great Desires no Limits know,
Whose Titles swell too high for humble Verse.
Thrones and Dominion are thy Seat,
While underneath thy lordly Feet

C

Each

Each Creature is in servile Bondage held,
 And to Obedience by thy Laws compell'd;
 Thus aw'd by the Imperial Rod
 Of Him, who did to thee impart
 A Share of Pow'r, by which thou art,
 As He to thee, so thou to them a God.

VIII.

Such was the State of Man by Birth,
 When first he trod the new-form'd Earth;
 When he uprightly walk'd in Innocence,
 And dar'd not with the Laws of God dispense;
 When filial Fear, and holy Love,
 Such as descended from above,
 Did gently lead him by the Hand,
 Through Paths of Virtue, to the promis'd Land;
 When Shame was yet to him unknown,
 And Fear was fix'd on God alone;
 When without Terror he could hear His Voice,
 To whom Obedience was his Choice:

When

When all within was Joy, without was Peace,
And Nature gladly yielded her Increase.
How happy he was then, let Angels tell ;
What he is now, ourselves know but too well.

IX.

Descend, my Muse, from thy exalted Strain,
In lively Colours, if you can,
Paint out the State of fallen Man ;
And tune thy Verse to Misery and Pain.
Man is like a Thing of Nought,
His longest Age is but a Thought ;
His boasted Power scarce deserves a Name,
What then can be his Idol, Fame ?
A Blast ! at best an empty Breath,
Which but commences at his Death.
When he is out of Hearing, 't may be told,
That he was wise and happy, rich and bold :
His dear-bought Pleasures are but gilded Pain,
Himself than Vanity, more vain ;

And

And yet, as if he'd fell to rise,
 Exalts himself above the Skies ;
 And when of real Honour dispossest'd,
 With empty Titles swells his guilty Crest.

X.

Hold! stay a while, it cannot be,
 What Contradictions do I see?
 Shameful Honour, royal Misery!

Why do we call that Moth supreme and high?
 Since to our Reason this must give the Lie.
 Why do we stile that Nothing Excellence?
 Or why that pigmy Mole-hill, Eminence?
 An empty Title now supplies the Place
 Of solid Virtue, which long since
 Fled with her Sister Innocence ;
 Nor, till he'd lost it, was Man call'd his Grace.

XI.

XI.

Raze out those mighty swelling Words,
Dread Monarchs, High and Mighty Lords.
What are these Monarchs? What these Mighty Kings?
But gaudy Phantoms, weak and mortal Things:
Companions of Corruption, Worms and Earth,
To whom they are ally'd, as well by Death as Birth.

XII.

See there that Tyrant, with his Iron Rod,
Ufurps a Pow'r, and vainly thinks himself a God.

Death soon will undeceive his Sense,
When like a Grafshopper he's driven hence.
Let him of Gout or Cholic feel the Pain,
Then round about him place his gaudy Train
Of Courtiers ---- On him let them wait,
Since he must suffer ---- let it be in State.
Upon his Head place the Imperial Crown,
Before his Feet let Nations tumble down:

D

Then

Then bid this Prince, that Duke, that Noble Lord,
Some Ease to suff'ring Majesty afford.

Draw 'up his Guards before the Palace-Gate,
There, under Arms, on Duty let them wait.

Then see, if all their Courage, all their Pow'r,
Can keep the Fever off --- but for one Hour.

No! through their Ranks unseen the Phantom strays,
And 'spight of all their Skill or Art,

He strikes the Monarch to the Heart,
And his pale Banner on his Face displays.

See how in Silence each one makes his Way!
See how he struggles with the Pangs of Death!

See how a King resigns his Breath,
And he who rul'd the World, becomes a Lump of
Clay!

XIII.

Let us descend now from the awful Throne,
The Vanity of Monarchs we have shown.

Let

Let now their num'rous mighty Throng
 Of Vassals be the Subject of our future Song.
 View well that high and mighty, most illustrious Prince,
 Viscount, Lord of, Earl of, Duke of -----
 The late Descendant of a noble Rank,
 Recount his Titles, blazon a whole Sheet
 With Azure, Argent, or ----- a *chequée* Field,
 Will best express his various Life,
 Made up of Pleasures, Pains, Grief, Ease, and Strife.
 Trace back his Pedigree of Ancestors long since,
 And see how those who gave him Birth
 Are now reduc'd to common Earth.
 Handle their Dust, clasp'd in their Marble Shrines,
 And see, if more than that of Slaves it shines.
 By these find out their Virtues, if you can;
 Depend not on the Marbles Flattery;
 For Marbles have been taught to falsify,
 And call the poor Remains of short-liv'd Man
 Invincible ----- victorious ----- and immortal.

While

While all you read is Contradiction,
And all his shining Epithets no more than Fiction.

Thus he, the Subject of our Verse,
Must take his Place in Nature's Bed,
Born thither in some mournful Hearse,
Adorn'd with the vain Trappings of the Dead;
And all th' Advantage he in Death can have,
May be ---- a Velvet Coffin, and a Marble Grave.

XIV.

Behold that Warrior bath'd in Blood,
Ten thousand Dangers hath withstood.
A Fly, a Moth, a Hair prevents his Breath,
And with the Coward Slave he sleeps in Death.
That learn'd Physician, who can Health impart,
And drive the Venom from th' infected Heart,
Himself to Death must fall a Prey,
And with his own the Life he sav'd repay.
That Beauty whose whole vain Desire,
Is to enslave, or set the World on Fire,

If

If with the System you were well acquainted,
You'd find, at best, it's but Corruption painted.
Yon' Orator, upon whose silver Tongue
The Music of persuasive Rhet'ric hung,
Will soon be silenc'd, and all that he can claim
On Earth, will be an empty Name.

Behold that awful Bench where Judges sit,
Or to condemn, or to acquit,
As Guilt or Innocence appears!
That very Judge, upon whose single Breath
Depends the Pow'r of Life and Death,
Himself a juster Sentence fears.

XV.

Enough, my Muse, let us no farther trace
The wretched Vanity of human Race.
It's not within our Art or Strength
To paint, or draw him at full Length:
No Epithets can well express
His vain, his empty Nothingness.

E

Him-

Himself, a Moth, a Worm, a Flow'r, a Spire of Grass!
 His Time doth swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle pass:
 Dream of a Dream, a Shadow pass'd away,
 His Birth, his Life, his Death, but of one Day!
 And ev'n that Day itself is but a Span,
 His greatest Glory Shame ----- Lord, what is Man!

JER. ii. 17.

Hast thou not procured this unto thyself?

F I N I S.

